



**Instytut Zachodni**  
im. Zygmunta Wojciechowskiego

## The Conference

# Polish-German experience and overcoming conflicts in the Western Balkans



Co-organizer:



Faculty of Political Science  
and Journalism

**22-23 October 2019**

Faculty of Political Sciences and Journalism of the University of Adam Mickiewicz in Poznań

## Guiding principles of our conference

- The agreements between Poland and Germany from 1989-1991 enabled not only closer political cooperation, but also the creation of institutions to intensify contacts between the two societies. The process of rapprochement was often referred to as Polish-German reconciliation. The Poles and Germans achieved a real rapprochement. However, mutual relations were not and are not free from various difficulties and barriers, for example, the persistent differences in the cultures of the memory of both nations. Nevertheless, Poland's political and economic cooperation with Germany is an undeniable fact and an important factor in Poland's position in Europe.
- The Polish-German experience concerns various forms and areas of cooperation and dialogue, including commemoration of historic sites, restoration of monuments, care for cemeteries, financial provision for victims of the Third Reich, creation of dialogue sites, a common history guide, implementation of youth exchange, exchanges and contacts on the principle partnerships of cities, municipalities, professional organizations, universities, schools, as well as representatives of the public administrations, etc.
- Numerous German educational and political institutions attach importance to transferring their experience from the accounts of the Nazi past to the partners from the Western Balkans, as well as German-French reconciliation. This is evidenced by initiatives developed as part of, for example, Memory Lab (Trans-European Exchange Platform on History and Remembrance) with the participation of Heinrich-Boell-Stiftung and Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung. They are often of a trilateral character, i.e. with the participation of the German and French parties as well as representatives interchangeably representing the Balkan states. They concern issues primarily related to the cultivation of remembrance of the tragic past, and thus can contribute to reconciliation processes among Western Balkan societies.
- The example of the above-mentioned activities argues that it would be sensible to present Polish-German initiatives referring both to the dimension of reconciliation and the practice of developing social contacts, which could strengthen the premises for political cooperation between societies / Balkan states.
- The aim of the conference is to critically discuss the balance of the Polish-German agreement and its infrastructure, i.e. existing institutions, forms and areas of dialogue / understanding, and to consider whether this agreement can be an inspiration / good example for other nations. It is also about presenting the experiences of Western Balkan states and nations. The solution of analogous problems arising from the past is necessary due to the declared willingness to join the European Union.

The conference will be held in Polish and English language.

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## Panel I

### "Is there a universal culture of reconciliation?"

- The processes of reconciliation at the international and intra-state level have refined their own forms, institutions and rituals. Do they have only a particular dimension? For example, are the solutions present in the processes of reconciliation between historically conflicted nations (e.g. Poles and Germans, Germans and French, Koreans and Japanese) could be practiced in the Western Balkans?
- The participants of the panel have experience and achievements in the field of research on the study of reconciliation processes / collective memory in comparative categories.

## Panel II

### "Dialogue and reconciliation: experiences of societies in the Western Balkans"

- Are there any initiatives for reconciliation between societies and peoples in the Western Balkans? How are these initiatives evaluated by public opinions in Western Balkan countries? Do the authorities of the West Balkan states support organizations of dialogue and see the need for reconciliation processes? Do the authorities of Western Balkan countries conduct specific memory policies?
- Is it possible to compare the experiences of Western Balkan societies with the experiences of Polish-German reconciliation? Are there similar forms and institutions of dialogue in the relations of West-Balkan societies as in Polish-German relations?
- Panel participants are representatives of academic centres, think tanks and / or social organizations interested in cooperation and dialogue between the societies of Western Balkan states or working towards closer relations with the EU.

## Conference Agenda

**22.10.2019**

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**15.00: PANEL I Is there a universal culture of reconciliation?**

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15.00: Official opening of the conference

- Prof. Andrzej Stelmach, Dean of the Faculty of Political Science and Journalism, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań

Participants:

Dr Martina Fischer, *Brot für die Welt*, Berlin

Prof. Waldemar Czachur, *Institute of German Studies, University of Warsaw*

Prof. Pierre-Frédéric Weber, *Institute of History and International Relations University of Szczecin*

Dr Jörg Lüer, *Deutsche Kommission „Justitia et Pax“*, Berlin

Dr Olga Barbasiewicz, *Institute of the Middle and Far East, Jagiellonian University, Cracow*

Moderators:

- Prof. Paweł Stachowiak, *Faculty of Political Science and Journalism, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań*
- Prof. Krzysztof Malinowski, *Institute for Western Affairs, Poznań*

16.30: Coffee break

16.45-17.30: Discussion

**23.10.2019**

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**10.00 PANEL II Dialogue and reconciliation: experiences of societies in the Western Balkans**

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Participants:

Marijana Toma, *Deputy Director of the Humanitarian Law Center (HLC)*, Serbia

Vesna Teršelič, *Director of Documenta - Centre for Dealing with the Past*, Croatia

Nora Ahmetaj, *Expert Consultant on Transitional Justice, Centre for Research, Documentation and Publication (CRDP)*, Kosovo

Prof. Dražana Lepir, *Udruženje građana "Oštra Nula"*, Bosnia and Hercegovina

Moderators:

- Prof. Jędrzej Paszkiewicz, *Department of History, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań*
- Dr Adam Jaskulski, *Faculty of Political Science and Journalism, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań*

11.30: Coffee break

11.45-12.30: Discussion

12.45: Closing of the conference